

Hamden Police Department

General Orders

Policy Number: 020-008

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Section: Traffic Enforcement

Rescinds: No Previous Version

Title: License Plate Recognition

Approved By: Police Commission

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to set forth the policies and procedures of the Hamden Police Department regarding the proper use of Automated License Plate Readers by members of the Hamden Police Department.

POLICY

1. LPR systems utilize specialized cameras to capture license plate images and use computers to perform OCR on those images such that the OCR values can be compared to a stored list of license plates values. The stored license plate value list is referred to as a hot list. The hot list contains license plate values associated with vehicles having significance to law enforcement, for example, license plates associated with stolen vehicles, vehicles associated with wanted or missing persons, vehicles associated with AMBER/SILVER Alerts, as well as those reasonably believed to be involved with criminal activity. LPR systems include mobile LPR systems, mounted on police vehicles, and portable LPR systems that can be deployed in temporary stationary locations.
2. The Hamden Police Department's LPR system operations software serves as a database, data management tool, inquiry tool, history tracking, and reporting interface for deployed LPR systems. The Hamden Police Department's LPR system operations software is installed on a system operations server located at the Hamden Police Department Headquarters, and is maintained by Hamden Police Department personnel.
3. The system operations software operates within a secured networked environment that allows license plate read data access to only authorized personnel. The system operations software receives all LPR reads collected by Hamden Police Department mobile and portable LPR systems, and organizes the data into a central database. This central database supports a reporting and query function in which authorized Hamden Police Department personnel have the ability to:
 - a. Search for LPR reads that may match a license plate or partial license plate;

Hamden Police Department General Orders

- b. Generate maps showing the location of LPR reads and alarms;
- c. Create metrics based reports utilizing LPR reads and alarms; and
- d. Segregate LPR reads and alarms associated within geographic or time based boundaries.

DEFINITIONS

1. LPR: License Plate Recognition
2. LPR System: Includes a camera and an associated mobile data computer running LPR software, wherein the mobile data computer may exchange data with a central LPR data server.
3. OCR: Optical Character Recognition.
4. System Operations Software: System Operation Software serves as a database, data management tool, inquiry tool, history tracking, and reporting interface for deployed LPR systems.
5. Read: A data file comprised of digital images of license plates and vehicles, and which contains associated data used by the LPR system (e.g., OCR values, date, time, and geographic coordinates associated with the license plate/vehicle image capture).
6. Alert: A visual and/or auditory notice that is triggered when the LPR system receives a "hit" based on an OCR value associated with a license plate.
7. Hit: A read having OCR values corresponding to license plate values that have previously been placed in a hot list.
8. Hot list: License plate values associated with vehicles having law enforcement relevance, for example, stolen cars, vehicles associated with AMBER/SILVER Alerts, as well as vehicles related with criminal activity.
9. Mobile LPR system: LPR systems which include cameras that are affixed, either permanently (hardwired) or temporarily (e.g., magnet-mounted), to a law enforcement vehicle.

Hamden Police Department General Orders

10. Portable LPR system: LPR systems which include cameras that can be temporarily deployed in stationary locations which include traffic barrels or speed radar signs.

PROCEDURES

A. Use, Installation and Maintenance

1. LPR systems facilitate access to such things as stolen vehicles and wanted person files for the purpose of supporting criminal investigations. As such, the operational use of LPR systems is restricted to authorized users for official law enforcement purposes.
2. Mobile LPR systems may only be used in vehicles or locations approved by the Chief of Police or his designee.
3. The IT Administrator will be responsible for maintenance of the system operations software on the system operations, mobile data computer, and all computer hardware and software related to the LPR systems.
4. LPR equipment shall be cleaned and maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
5. Any damage to LPR systems shall be reported immediately to the shift supervisor.

B. Hamden Police Department LPR Program Administrator

1. The Chief of Police will select a LPR Program Administrator who will be responsible for the overall management of LPR data collection, maintenance, searches, and retention related to the Hamden Police Department's LPR systems. The Hamden Police Department LPR Program Administrator is also responsible for ensuring all hot lists are updated in a timely manner. The LPR Program Administrator will serve as the LPR systems custodian and shall:
 - a. Oversee and administer the storage and management of all LPR data;

Hamden Police Department General Orders

- b. Ensure all hot lists are updated in the system operations software and are transmitted to the mobile LPR systems as necessary;
 - c. Ensure stored data is purged from the LPR system operations software 90 days after it has been initially stored, and ensure that purging operations are immediately suspended upon the LPR data becoming subject to a preservation or other legal retention obligation involving the LPR data.
 - d. Designate personnel who will be authorized to access the secure data collected on the systems operations software server and conduct LPR stored data queries;
 - e. Ensure appropriate training of all Hamden Police Department personnel that utilize Hamden Police Department's LPR system operations software prior to those personnel using the system;
 - f. Ensure all training is documented; and
 - g. Ensure ongoing training of personnel is provided as needed.
 - h. Maintain an adequate number of properly trained personnel;
 - i. Hot lists shall be updated as necessary by the Hamden Police Department LPR Program Administrator or designee; however, an update shall be made at no greater interval than once daily.
- C. Hot List Updating and Storage
1. The Hamden Police Department LPR Program Administrator or designee shall be responsible for updating the LPR system hot lists pursuant this policy. All personnel shall be contacted immediately if problems are encountered with the updating of any LPR system.

Hamden Police Department General Orders

2. Each hot list shall be retained for a period of time corresponding with the retention of the LPR systems reads that were compared against that hot list.

D. Data Collection, Retention, and Dissemination

1. Data collected by the Hamden Police Department LPR systems will be maintained on the system operations server utilizing the system operations software.
2. Only trained personnel approved by the LPR Program Administrator may access LPR system data on the system operations server.
3. LPR data on the system operations server shall be stored for a period not to exceed 90 days from the creation date, unless such data becomes subject to a preservation obligation or other legal obligation requiring retention. All hot lists shall be retained for a period of time coterminous with the retention of the LPR systems reads that were compared against that hot list. In the event that LPR system read data becomes subject to a legal obligation to retain, the associated hot list shall also be preserved.
4. In those circumstances when a retention obligation arises, purging will be immediately suspended with respect to the data subject to the obligation.
5. All requests for data stored on the system operations server shall be considered in view of applicable law, statute, regulation, and policy.
6. Random audits shall be conducted on the use of the LPR data.

E. Mobile LPR Systems

1. Mobile LPR systems will be installed in Hamden Police Department vehicles and deployed as directed by the Chief of Police or designee.
2. Shift Supervisors shall:

Hamden Police Department General Orders

- a. Ensure the LPR systems are properly deployed and maintained;
 - b. Ensure all personnel assigned, utilizing, or maintaining LPR systems are properly trained prior to accessing the system;
 - c. Ensure all incidents that involve an LPR hit and arrests that are related to LPR usage are properly documented in and
 - d. Be responsible for overseeing the LPR systems assigned to personnel under their command and ensuring compliance with Hamden Police Department policy.
- F. All data scanned by the LPR system is transmitted to the mobile data computer and compared against the hot list. In the event that a possible match is made between the read and the hot list, an alarm is initiated. When an alarm is received alerting personnel of a potentially hit, a read record will be displayed on the mobile data computer screen. Such read record will include a digital image of the captured license plate.
- G. Personnel who receive an alarm of a hit shall compare the digital image of the license plate to the NCIC information to verify the hit. Verified hits shall be accepted by activating an "accept" alarm key displayed on the mobile data computer screen. When an alarm does not result in a verified hit, personnel shall activate the "reject" alarm key.
- H. Personnel shall provide the information by radio to the communications division, who shall attempt to confirm the hit according to current policy.
- I. Personnel assigned mobile or portable LPR systems shall be responsible for the following:
1. Logging onto Hamden Police Department's LPR system to activate the system and receive updated "hot lists" at the beginning of each shift.

Hamden Police Department General Orders

2. Ensure that personnel who receive a hit on a scanned license plate compare the digital image of the license plate to the NCIC information to verify the hit.
3. Providing information by radio to the communications division who shall attempt to confirm the hit according to established policy.
4. Confirming a hit according to established policy prior to any enforcement action being taken.
5. Adding specific information after the initial upload of the fixed LPR system only if it becomes necessary, such as in cases where crimes are reported after the LPR has been deployed (e.g. stolen vehicles, AMBER alerts, SILVER alerts, radio item broadcasts, etc.), or when a manual plate check needs to be performed.) Such updates shall be uploaded to the system operations server automatically, and such update will result in the generation of an updated hot list that will be transmitted to each deployed LPR system in use.
6. Ensuring that all custom manual inputs have a specific criminal investigative or patrol purpose.
7. Ensuring that all data from the mobile LPR system is transferred to Hamden Police Department's LPR systems operations server.

J. Hit Verification

1. The LPR system does not interface with real time COLLECT and NCIC data.
2. It should be recognized that information derived from license plates is compared against information on the hot list which may be up to 24 hours old.
3. Personnel must verify all hits through COLLECT and NCIC and follow all Hamden Police Department policies and procedures.
4. **The LPR system is ONLY to be used as an investigative tool. Confirmation is essential prior to a stop.**